



Tax Base Erosion Night

Posted by [Pierluigi Oliverio](#) on Monday, December 06, 2010

It is that time of year again, with lobbyists circling City Hall in preparation for the General Plan hearings.

With the leadership of Mayor Reed, modifications to our General Plan (GP) have been reduced to once a year, for the most part. At the GP hearings, applicants make their case as to why current land-use designations should be changed to allow for the applicant to build what they want, regardless of how the land is currently zoned.

These "conversion" requests are typically for land that is industrial/commercial to housing. Or it could be extending the urban growth boundary to allow for more suburban sprawl. By the way, San Jose currently has over 21,000 units of housing approved and entitled on land zoned residential that has not started construction.

With more conversions of our industrial, commercial and retail land, we are pecking away the tax base a little at a time, which narrows our future options down the road.

Either you view San Jose as a dead city with little chance of economic growth (so go ahead and convert each proposal put before you because it doesn't matter), or you have the view that there is future potential for San Jose to bring more small business and large business. I feel San Jose has not reached it's potential but will be severely handicapped if we allow death by a thousand cuts when it comes to land use. San Jose will be fighting for a smaller piece of the economic pie in the United States as globalization continues and our national debt reels out of control. San Jose should control it's destiny by standing firm in not changing land-use designations to housing.

At the budget hearings on Nov. 18, I shared that I would have a very difficult time asking employees for wage concessions if the Council cannot hold the line on the conversion of employment land. Seems only fair: If you are going to ask someone for money to pay your utility bill, don't leave the furnace on all day when you're at work. The Council has had to tell residents and employees "no" this fiscal year

because of past decisions. I cannot and will not jeopardize more city jobs that provide services with conversions that hurt our future tax base.

In one of my first votes on the City Council, I voted to rezone industrial land to housing. I later wrote about my regrets regarding this vote.

One of the proposed exceptions that the Council denied in May 2008 on a 6-5 vote is back again with a different lobbyist. The same property owner also owns land where the proposed baseball stadium would be located. I met with the property owner representatives who said if the City would rezone this piece of land then they would consider selling the other piece of land to the City for baseball. I believe each rezoning should be judged on its own merits and not tied to a quid pro quo. I wrote about this property the last time it came to Council.

Exceptions to our General Plan (tax base erosion) will be heard Tuesday, Dec. 7, not before 7:15pm. I would be impressed if more than one person, whether it be city employees or San Jose residents, would speak at the Council meeting and simply say, "hold the line—please do not convert our future tax base."

Congratulations to the Willow Glen Rams winning the CCS Division 2 Football championship over Sequoia of Redwood City. An incredible season that rallied the school and neighborhood. The star quarterback is the son of my classmate and friend from Willow Glen High. Sadly, my friend passed away from cancer several years ago however his son is the spitting image of his father, which makes it a very special victory.

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